

## Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra – Ensemble 10:10

### January 28 programme complementary content

#### **Chloe Rooke**

Praised for her infectious enthusiasm, British conductor **Chloe Rooke** began her conducting journey with student and amateur orchestras at Oxford and in London, driven by a passion to bring people together to forge meaningful relationships and powerful performances.

She came to international attention after winning the Contemporary Award at the first International Conducting Competition in Rotterdam in 2022 and the Audience Prize at the Donatella Flick-LSO Conducting Competition in 2021. She was subsequently invited to conduct the LSO in family concerts at the Barbican and made her mark at Kings Place with the London Sinfonietta and in a New Year's concert with the BBC Concert Orchestra. Rooke was assistant conductor at the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic in 2022-23, conducting them at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and on recordings, and in September 2024 was appointed emerging artist in residence with Residentie Orkest, The Hague. She is also artistic director and principal conductor of **Street Orchestra Live**, the UK's first pop-up street orchestra.

Recent highlights include debuts with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Aurora Orchestra and Noord Nederlands Orkest, and conducting a production of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* [at Garsington](#) in summer 2025.

Rooke studied at Oxford and the Royal Academy of Music – where she was awarded numerous prizes and gained an MA (distinction) in conducting – following that with post-graduate study on the Dutch National Master in Orchestral Conducting course.

#### **Anna Clyne**

**Anna Clyne** composed her first work at seven, and aged 11 she had her first piece performed at the Oxford Youth Prom. Three decades on, the London-born, US-based, Grammy-nominated Clyne has been described as “a composer of uncommon gifts” (*New York Times*) and is one of the most in-demand and performed composers today.

She works with orchestras and ensembles, choreographers, filmmakers and visual artists across the globe and has been commissioned to create work by arts institutions and organisations including the Barbican, Carnegie Hall, the Royal Concertgebouw, LA Philharmonic, San Francisco Ballet and Sydney Opera House, and for festivals including the Edinburgh International Festival and Last Night of the Proms. The World Economic Forum commissioned her to write ***Restless Oceans***, which was premiered at its annual meeting in 2019 by an all-woman orchestra under the baton of Marin Alsop.

Clyne has been a composer in residence with several orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Helsinki Philharmonic, and BBC Philharmonic. From 2019-22 she was associate composer with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. She composes widely for orchestra, chamber ensembles, brass ensembles, choral and vocal works. One of her earliest pieces for chamber orchestra was *Within Her Arms*, which was written in memory of her mother and premiered in Los Angeles in 2009. Other key compositions include *Night Ferry*, *Masquerade* and *Midnight Hour*, and her violin concerto ***The Seamstress***.

Watch a performance of Anna Clyne's [\*\*\*Within Her Arms\*\*\*](#).

## John Adams

John Adams has been described by the *New York Times* as “arguably our greatest living composer”. [\*\*The composer, conductor and creative thinker\*\*](#) was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1947 and grew up in New England where, as a youngster, he played clarinet in a marching band and community orchestras. He started composing at the age of 10 and went on to study at Harvard where he conducted the Bach Society Orchestra, listened to Hendrix, queued to buy a copy of *Sgt Pepper* the day the seminal album was released – and became a proponent of 20<sup>th</sup> Century modernism, although his work also encompasses wider orchestral textures.

Adams’ works, both symphonic and operatic (including the 1987 opera *Nixon in China*), stand out for their expression, brilliance of sound and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes and have helped turn the tide of contemporary musical aesthetics away from academic modernism towards a more expansive, expressive language. At the start of his career, he wrote several pieces of electronic music for a homemade synthesiser, while in the 1980s his work was driven by harmonies and rhythm. But by the 1990s Adams had started to think more about melody, driven by what he has described as ‘being partially liberated by a new chromatic richness that was creeping into my sound’. His extensive catalogue includes operas, stage works and film scores, orchestral and chamber music, piano pieces, and tape and electronic compositions.

One of his best-known and most performed pieces remains the 1978 composition [\*\*Shaker Loops\*\*](#), originally written as a string quartet called *Wavemaker* in which he attempted to capture the rippling of water in oscillating musical form. Other often performed works include *Harmonielehre*, *Chamber Symphony*, *Absolute Jest*, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and his 1993 [\*\*Violin Concerto\*\*](#) with its singing line which is an example of ‘hypermelody’.

His many accolades include several Grammys and honorary doctorates, while *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2003) won the Pulitzer Prize for Music. In 2009 he was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame, and in 2019 he was awarded the [\*\*Erasmus Prize\*\*](#).

Listen to John Adams talk about his [\*\*career and compositional inspiration\*\*](#).

## Julia Perry

*A grant from the ABO Trust’s Sirens programme (supporting the promotion of music by historical women composers) made this performance possible.*

If you were asked to name an American composer of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, who would spring to mind? Copland perhaps? Samuel Barber probably. Certainly Leonard Bernstein. But it would be criminal not to add the name [\*\*Julia Perry\*\*](#) to that all-male line-up of musical talent. Defying the boundaries of both race and sex, Perry enjoyed a prolific composing career, her work embracing both a European classical and Neoclassical style and the musical language of her African American roots.

A conductor, singer and teacher as well as composer, [\*\*Julia Perry\*\*](#) was born in Kentucky in 1924 and studied voice, piano and composition on a scholarship at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, Juilliard in New York, the Curtis Institute (where the mezzo soprano studied voice), and with the great Nadia Boulanger in Paris where she received the Boulanger Grand Prix for her (sadly lost) violin sonata. In the 1950s she also received two Guggenheim Fellowships to enable her to continue her studies, including with Luigi Dallapiccola in Italy where, in 1952, she composed the popular *A Short Piece for*

*Orchestra*. She worked in both Europe and America where, in 1964, her opera-ballet *The Selfish Giant* won an American Academy of Arts and Letters Prize in music. The following year she became the first Black female composer to have a work (*A Short Piece for Orchestra*) performed by the New York Philharmonic.

Despite ongoing health issues and suffering a severely debilitating stroke in the 1970s, she continued to compose – training herself to write with her left hand – and her catalogue spans music for orchestra (including 13 symphonies), chamber ensembles, voice, and chorus. Sadly, since her death in 1979, some of her works have become lost.

Among the best-known of her 100 pieces are *Stabat Mater* for contralto and strings, *Symphony No.10* (or the ‘Soul Symphony’), *Symphony in One Movement* for violas and basses, *Prelude for Strings* and *Three Spirituals for Orchestra*.

Enjoy a performance of the dynamic [\*A Short Piece for Orchestra\*](#).

### **Mathilde Wantenaar**

A combination of craftsmanship and openness to different genres make Amsterdam-born [Mathilde Wantenaar](#) a very versatile composer, and her work has been described as ‘lyrical, charming, eclectic yet authentic’. Liverpool Philharmonic audiences had a chance to discover that when her *Prelude à une nuit américaine* was given its UK premiere at Philharmonic Hall in April 2025, where its composer described collaborating with the Orchestra as “such a joy”.

The daughter of a singer mother and an accordionist father, Wantenaar was born in 1993 and studied classical composition at the Amsterdam Conservatory and classical voice at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague. She carried on a dual life as a composer and singer until 2019 when she received both her first opera commission (from the Dutch National Opera) and her first orchestral commission (*Prélude à une nuit américaine*) from the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

[Wantenaar](#) works with individual musicians as well as small ensembles, large orchestras and everything in between, and is particularly interested in creating opera. She has written for, and collaborated with, the Netherlands Philharmonic, Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Choir, Dutch Wind Ensemble, Liza Ferschtman, Ralph van Raat, Johannette Zoma and Simone Lamsma among others. Recent [commissions](#) include *Meader* for the Rotterdam Philharmonic; a *Violin Concerto* performed by Simone Lamsma and the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest; *Suite 5*, commissioned by Ailsa Weilerstein; *Accordion Concerto* for solo accordion and symphony orchestra (which won the 2023 Buma Classical Award); and *Serenade*, commissioned and performed by the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra.

Watch a [short interview](#) about Mathilde Wantenaar and her work.

### **Aaron Breeze**

Composer Aaron Breeze is far too young to have frequented Manchester’s legendary Haçienda superclub during its heyday. But the 31-year-old, whose work named after the legendary venue receives its premiere tonight, is certainly familiar with the band most closely associated with it.

“I was part of the keyboard ensemble from the Royal Northern College of Music working with New Order during Manchester International Festival in 2017 and later went on tour with them in 2018 in Austria and Italy,” he says. “There was a massive comedown afterwards because nothing felt real anymore. But it was really, really cool.”

New Order's bassist Peter Hook was a co-founder of The Haçienda, which was owned by Tony Wilson's Factory Records and opened in May 1982. The club played a central role in the city's cultural scene during the 1980s and 1990s, hosting bands including the Happy Mondays, Stone Roses, The Smiths, Primal Scream and Oasis. Breeze says his work captures "the energy, passion, and community of the nightclub's heyday, reimagined through a contemporary lens."

He originally composed the piece for brass band, and it became part of his entry for the [2024 Rushworth Composition Prize](#) in which he was highly commended. Separately, the work went on to win the inaugural [Derwent Brass International Composition Award](#). Reorchestrating it for a chamber ensemble has, its composer admits, been a challenge, particularly adapting the work from the homogenous sound of a brass band to an ensemble which is much more varied in terms of timbre. But, he adds, at the same time it has afforded him more creative scope. He was influenced, he reveals, by the drum patterns of music in the gym.

"The piece itself is quite minimalistic, which is not something I normally do," he explains. "The other piece I submitted in my Rushworth [Prize] application was at the other end of the scale, almost verging on New Complexity, and closer to something like Brian Ferneyhough or Richard Barrett. Whereas *The Haçienda* is probably closer to Philip Glass or Steve Wright: it's the complete opposite of what I normally do."

Born in the West Midlands and brought up in Aberdeen and Tameside, Breeze started learning electronic keyboard at the age of four and later switched to piano. He thrived on the flexibility of the keyboard, and its ability to replicate the sound of any instrument, and as a child would spend a lot of time improvising, which led naturally to composition. He studied piano, jazz piano and composition at the Junior Royal Northern before taking his degree at the conservatoire. His composition tutors included Professor David Horne and Dr Larry Goves, and he was a finalist in the prestigious RNCM Gold Medal concert in 2016 and 2017.

Since then, his career has followed a parallel path of performing (solo, classical, jazz accompaniment and ballet piano) and composing, also serving as musical director of Denton Brass Band, arranger, audio mixer and video editor for [The Manchester Video Game Orchestra](#), and accompanist for Manchester's Cross Street Chapel. He also spent a year in Austria as a ballet repetiteur and composer at Landestheater Linz and is currently a ballet pianist for Warrington's KS Dance.

"I take on projects if I have the capacity, but I also take pride in versatility," Breeze says. "Each strand of work - whether theatre dance music, arranging video game music, brass bands, piano performance - feeds into my composition. The different contexts give me new perspectives, and I try to draw inspiration from whatever setting I'm working in. For me, variety isn't a distraction from composing, but a way of broadening and deepening it."

Listen to the brass band version of [The Haçienda](#).

#### **Composer's note**

*The Haçienda* draws on electronic effects – like arpeggiators and sidechain compression – to create orchestration that could only exist in the 21st century. The piece features repeated motifs, dynamic drops, buildups, and some juicy fat basses – attempting to include everything you might want to hear in an ensemble work inspired by nightclub music. That's as much as I want to say. Anything more would be a spoiler...